

## [Erik Christian Jensen #2]

[Mass.?] [1938-9?] Erik Christian Jensen Paper 2

STATE MASSACHUSETTS

NAME OF WORKER EMILY B. MOORE

ADDRESS 84 ELM STREET, WORCESTER, MASSACHUSETTS

DATE OF INTERVIEW

SUBJECT LIVING LORE

NAME OF INFORMANT ERIK CHRISTIAN JENSEN

ADDRESS WORCESTER, MASSACHUSETTS

Erik Christian Jensen was born in Denmark in 1870 and came to Worcester when he was twenty-three years old. He is a tall, old man, stooped and misshapen, with a thatch of pale yellow hair, deep blue eyes, a booming voice and a kindly courteous manner. A boyhood accident injured his back so that his life was long despaired of, but Erik, as he will tell you with a twinkle, came from a family "who die old", and not even a bad back was going to deter this determined young man. Today, "Old Erik" is hale and healthy. He moves with the deftness of a man years younger, his hands are quick and sure. Only his bent body and extremely long arms are reminders of the long-ago injury.

The Jensens, father, mother and two daughters, have lived for many years in a comfortable little home set high on a hill on Grove Street near the outskirts of the city. It is a trim tidy little home, well-painted with bright flower gardens and a strip of green lawn, Mr. Jensen's pride and joy.

## Library of Congress

Mr. Jensen has worked in the wire mill ever since he came to Worcester, forty-six years ago. He appears to be a much valued worker. It has been suggested by those who profess to know, 2 that at one time, Mr. Jensen worked out a method of tin plating which proved to be of such value to the company, that they were able to make great improvements in their products. If this is true, Mr. Jensen does not seem aware of it. He tells of his work simply, with pride in a job well done, but makes no reference to having materially aided the "company."

Very early in his life in Worcester, Erik found it necessary to turn to a "side line" when the wire mill was "low." Naturally deft with tools and machinery, he began repairing bicycles. Business boomed, for it was the age of the "League of American Wheelmen," of tandems and "bicycles built for two." In the past few decades, the bicycle industry was mainly confined to youngsters, but with the new vogue of recent years, "Old Erik" does a steady business.

The little bicycle shop, neat and scrupulously clean, is in the cellar of his house. It is really the first floor for on one side, the hill has been cut away to allow Mr. Jensen room enough for an entrance to his shop.

Mr. Jensen speaks English fairly well if he thinks about it. But when he becomes excited or strives to explain a point about which he is none too certain, his voice becomes blurred and thick and his words come out helter-skelter, crowding and pushing one another. It is with the children who came in with broken "bikes" of all makes and stages of repair, that Mr. Jensen appears most at ease. A broad smile, twinkling blue eyes and a quick hearty laugh form a language universally understood.